A STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK FOR HELPING PREVENT MASS ATROCITIES

UNITED STATES
HOLOCAUST
MEMORIAL
MUSEUM

SIMON-SKJODT CENTER
FOR THE PREVENTION OF GENOCIDE

THE UNITED STATES HOLOCAUST MEMORIAL MUSEUM
teaches that the Holocaust was preventable and that by
heeding warning signs and taking early action, individuals
and governments can save lives. With this knowledge,
the **Simon-Skjodt Center for the Prevention of Genocide**
works to do for the victims of genocide today what the
world failed to do for the Jews of Europe in the 1930s
and 1940s. The mandate of the Simon-Skjodt Center is
to alert the United States' national conscience, influence
policy makers, and stimulate worldwide action to prevent
and work to halt acts of genocide or related crimes against
humanity, and advance justice and accountability. Learn
more at **ushmm.org/genocide-prevention.**

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FOREWORD

The 1979 Report of the President's Commission on the Holocaust, which laid out the vision for the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum and its Committee on Conscience that oversees the Museum's genocide prevention efforts, stated, "Only a conscious, concerted attempt to learn from past errors can prevent recurrence to any racial, religious, ethnic, or national group." As the Museum's Founding Chairman Elie Wiesel said when addressing the importance of preventing genocide today, "A memorial unresponsive to the future would violate the memory of the past."

The Museum's Simon-Skjodt Center for the Prevention of Genocide was established to fulfill that vision by transmitting the lessons and legacy of the Holocaust and "to alert the national conscience, influence policy makers, and stimulate worldwide action to confront and prevent genocide."

The Simon-Skjodt Center's "lessons learned" project is one way the Museum seeks to carry out the charge to identify lessons from history that can potentially contribute to saving lives by preventing future genocides and related crimes against humanity.

The main goal of the project is to understand better how policy makers, across all levels of government, can take effective action to prevent mass atrocity crimes and protect civilian populations in situations where they face serious threats of group-targeted, systematic violence.

This "strategic framework" is designed to support policy makers and advocates in thinking through the types of strategies that are most relevant to preventing mass atrocities. It complements the Tools for Atrocity Prevention web resource, where users can explore the results from a systematic review of 30 years of research on 12 atrocity prevention tools.

Both the strategic framework and the Tools website are meant to help people think through how to help prevent mass atrocities. This paper offers a relatively simple framework to encourage thinking holistically about which prevention tools used together are likely to have the greatest impact.

By reviewing academic and policy literature and reports about responses to recent mass atrocity crises, we identified four general strategies that have been and could be used to help prevent mass atrocities. This paper does not argue for or against any particular strategy or tool, but suggests that more systematic consideration about strategies should yield more effective responses.

The Simon-Skjodt Center's "lessons learned" project seeks to amass information that would help support our leaders in navigating weighty decisions about how to respond to serious risks of mass atrocities. This is not a matter of telling decision makers "what works," as if preventing genocide were a purely technical matter, free from uncertainty, the uniqueness of every situation, and political judgment.

Preventing genocide is of course difficult. In deciding how to respond, policy makers face an array of constraints and competing concerns. We know from the Holocaust what can happen when early warning signs go unheeded and responses fall short. We aim for this strategic framework to serve as a tool and a resource for policy makers and others interested in prevention. We hope it helps them think through the actions that can make the greatest impact in saving lives.

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INTRODUCTION

The Simon-Skjodt Center's "Lessons Learned in Preventing and Responding to Mass Atrocities" project aims to understand better how policy makers, across all levels of government, can take effective action to prevent mass atrocity crimes and protect civilian populations in situations in which they face serious threats of group-targeted, systematic violence.[1]

This document is designed to support policy makers and advocates in thinking through the types of strategies that are most relevant to preventing mass atrocities—that is, instances of large-scale, systematic violence against civilian populations.[2] It does not argue for or against any particular strategy or tool, but suggests that more systematic consideration about strategies should yield more effective responses.

What do we mean by strategy?

The term "strategy" is used in countless different ways. One common usage refers to strategy as a collection of actions being taken or planned to pursue a set of objectives in a particular context. This is typically what is meant by a government strategy with respect to another country, which would include multiple objectives and "lines of effort." More loosely, strategy is frequently used to refer to a high-level choice or directive that guides more specific actions, as distinguished from tactics, which are about the lower-level actions.

This document focuses on a slightly different conception of strategy: the *ways* in which a set of actions are thought to help achieve a stated goal.[3]

Actions taken in support of a large and complex goal, such as the prevention of mass atrocities, almost never achieve the goal directly. Strategies spell out *how* any particular set of actions is meant to contribute to the prevention of mass atrocities. In other words, strategies describe the actions' immediate effects and how they, in turn, help prevent mass atrocities.[4]

Why is it important to think about strategies to help prevent mass atrocities?

Existing resources on the prevention of mass atrocities have paid surprisingly little attention to the question of strategy. By contrast, the metaphor of an atrocity prevention "toolbox" is ubiquitous.

The concept of a toolbox is valuable in identifying a large number of actions that could be used to help prevent mass atrocities. Drawing attention to the toolbox is a powerful way to counter the misconception that policy makers' choices when facing a mass atrocity crisis amount to acquiescence or forceful intervention.[5]

Without a framework for thinking about strategies, however, responses to atrocity crises risk being scattershot collections of discrete actions that fail to reinforce each other. The lack of a clear strategy also

can slow down deliberations when timeliness is critical, lead to bureaucratically driven decisions whereby each agency or office offers up its standard response, or support the use of tools in a rigid, predetermined sequence.[6] By contrast, embracing strategies should encourage thinking holistically about which tools used together are likely to have the greatest impact.

Thinking about strategies—*how* a set of actions will yield impact—should help policy makers address two critical tasks on which the toolbox concept offers little assistance:

Without a framework for thinking about strategies, responses to atrocity crises risk being scattershot collections of discrete actions that fail to reinforce each other.

1. Deciding which tools should be used in a given situation: Depictions of the atrocity prevention toolbox list a large number of separate tools, but many tools operate via common mechanisms.[7] Thinking of tools as means of promoting one of a few basic ways to prevent mass atrocities should lead to more systematic consideration of which tools are most appropriate. Deploying multiple tools that operate through the same mechanism should increase their effectiveness.

2. Deciding how specific tools should be designed and implemented: Some single tools have potential to contribute to the prevention of mass atrocities in multiple ways. Situating the use of tools within a broader strategy makes explicit the way in which tools are meant to exert their effects. This clarity should guide choices about design and implementation of specific tools to maximize their impact.

To illustrate, consider targeted sanctions, a tool that has been used with increasing frequency over recent years.

- One way that targeted sanctions can contribute to the prevention of mass atrocities is by exacting political or reputational costs on potential perpetrators in hopes of affecting their decision making. Another way targeted sanctions can contribute is by limiting the material resources available to potential perpetrators in hopes of restricting their ability to commit atrocities.

- If sanctions are used mainly to impose political or reputational costs, it does not necessarily matter how they affect a target's access to resources. For some targets, having one's name put on a public list for committing or abetting atrocities could be costly enough to lead to a change in behavior.

- If, by contrast, sanctions are meant to reduce a potential perpetrator's ability to finance or carry out atrocities, it is critical to restrict access to alternative sources of revenue or other critical means, such as arms.

- Given these different ways that targeted sanctions might help prevent mass atrocities, it makes little sense to reach for the sanctions tool without first being clear about the broader strategy. The chosen strategy has significant implications on how sanctions should be designed and implemented. The choice of strategy would also lead one to consider different tools to reinforce the effects of targeted sanctions—public statements of condemnation, for example, if the strategy

focused on raising political costs, or export controls, if the strategy focused on restricting access to resources.

The scope and limitations of this framework

The strategies described in this framework are meant to be relevant to situations of acute risks of atrocities, in which potential perpetrators and potential target groups can be identified with reasonably high confidence. In other words, they represent what are sometimes called "operational" or "direct" prevention strategies. This framework does not attempt to encompass "upstream" or "structural" prevention strategies, which focus on addressing underlying risk factors at a national or societal level. Nor does it consider how the use of particular tools in one situation might contribute to the prevention of atrocities in other situations (what is sometimes called "systemic" prevention)—for example, by promoting general deterrence. The chosen focus of this framework is *not* a judgment about the importance or effectiveness of these different approaches.[8]

As will be apparent, the strategies described below are quite broad. This is necessary given the wide variation across mass atrocity situations. A set of general atrocity prevention strategies should be relevant and adaptable, for example, to potential atrocities in the context of armed conflict as well as those during "peacetime," to potential atrocities by state and non-state groups, and to potential atrocities that are motivated by extremist ideology and those that result from a desire to retain political power. Because atrocity prevention strategies are highly context-dependent, the general strategies discussed below should be a starting point for tailored applications in particular cases.

The strategies were developed by reviewing existing academic and policy literature (see Annex B) and reports analyzing US government action in response to recent mass atrocity crises.[9] They are meant to represent a reasonably comprehensive set of approaches, but are not meant to be fully exhaustive.

Lastly, it is important to reiterate that the description of these strategies and reference to specific atrocity prevention tools is *meant to help policy makers think through their options*, *not to recommend any approach*. Deciding what actions should be taken in a particular situation requires consideration of a host of factors that are mostly not discussed here—for example, what other important interests are trying to be advanced? What are the views of the public and key stakeholders, such as victim/survivor groups? What actions are key allies prepared to undertake in concert? How should risks of unintended consequences be weighed against potential positive outcomes? How should short-term interests be weighed against long-term risks, or vice versa? Some of these issues are discussed below, after the descriptions of the four general strategies.

FOUR GENERAL STRATEGIES TO HELP PREVENT MASS ATROCITIES

This section describes four strategies that could be used to prevent mass atrocities: (1) dissuading potential perpetrators from committing mass atrocities, (2) degrading potential perpetrators' capacity to commit atrocities, (3) protecting vulnerable civilian populations,[10] and (4) facilitating leadership or political transition.[11] Each strategy described follows a distinct logic, but they are not necessarily mutually exclusive. A comprehensive approach in a particular case might well mean pursuing more than one of these strategies.

For each strategy, I offer a summary description, stipulate key assumptions, identify the specific mechanisms through which the strategy could exert its effects,[12] describe key analytic considerations, and identify atrocity prevention tools that commonly support the strategy. Table 1 summarizes this information for all four strategies.

1. Dissuade potential perpetrators from committing atrocities

SUMMARY: In essence, dissuasion is a strategy designed to alter the decision calculus of potential perpetrators. The strategy can be directed at powerful elites who might consider orchestrating large-scale attacks and/or lower-level potential perpetrators, such as members of state security forces or informal militia, who would carry out atrocities.

Dissuasion strategies are likely to be relevant to virtually any context. Use of the term "dissuasion" as opposed to "persuasion" is meant to underscore that the goal of the strategy is a negative—that is, success does not require that potential perpetrators take any specific actions as long as they do *not* commit atrocities. Note that dissuasion is more encompassing than deterrence, which relies exclusively on threats of punishment.

Each of the four strategies—dissuading perpetrators, degrading capacity, protecting civilians, and facilitating transition—follows a distinct logic, but they are not mutually exclusive.

KEY ASSUMPTIONS: Dissuasion strategies assume that potential perpetrators—leaders and "foot soldiers"—base decisions, at least somewhat, on a calculation of costs and benefits, however they perceive them. It is not necessary to assume that decision making is perfectly rational, or that material costs and benefits are the only ones that matter.

Dissuasion strategies assume that potential perpetrators' decisions might be influenced directly or indirectly. Indirect dissuasion might include, for example, attempts to encourage third-party states or multinational corporations to exert influence over potential perpetrators.

MECHANISMS:
- Increasing expected costs of committing atrocities;

- Increasing expected benefits of alternative courses of action;

- Helping potential perpetrators find a way to satisfy their core interests without committing atrocities (for example, via "joint problem solving" mediation);

TABLE 1: Summary of strategies, key assumptions, mechanisms, and commonly supporting tools

Strategies	*Dissuade* potential perpetrators from committing atrocities	*Degrade* potential perpetrators' capacity to commit atrocities	*Protect* vulnerable populations	*Facilitate* leadership or political transition
Key assumptions	Potential perpetrators—leaders and "foot soldiers"—make decisions at least partly based on a calculation of perceived costs and benefits. Dissuasion can occur directly and indirectly.	Mass atrocities depend on perpetrators having certain material and operational capacities. Personnel, arms, finances, and communication capacities are normally most important.	Perpetrators' ability to access civilian populations and the capacity of civilian populations to protect themselves or get out of harm's way affect the occurrence and severity of atrocities.	Perceived interests or ideologies of a small number of top leaders sometimes drive the commission of mass atrocities. Different leaders might be less prone to commit atrocities.
Mechanisms	Increasing expected costs of committing atrocities Increasing expected benefits of alternative courses of action Facilitating potential perpetrators' identification of a way to satisfy their core interests without committing atrocities Changing potential perpetrators' valuation of different options or outcomes	Reducing resources available to potential perpetrators Increasing the cost or reducing the operational efficiency of attacking civilian populations	Direct physical protection Increasing civilian populations' capacity to defend themselves Mitigating harm to civilian populations	Increasing expected costs of remaining in political power Increasing expected benefits of leadership exit Facilitating a leadership transition agreement among conflicting parties Forceful removal of leaders
Selected tools that commonly support the strategy	Mediation Sanctions Conditional offers of assistance Threats of prosecution Naming and shaming	Targeted financial sanctions Arms embargoes Trade or investment restrictions Disruption of communications networks Military intervention	Peace operations Security assistance Support to non-state armed groups Support to civilian self-protection efforts Humanitarian assistance Refugee protection	Diplomatic pressure Mediation Targeted sanctions Threats of prosecutions Official amnesties Electoral assistance Military intervention

- Changing the way that potential perpetrators assign value to different options or outcomes (for example, persuading potential perpetrators to adopt more inclusive conceptions of the nation or place less value on retaining political power).

An effective dissuasion strategy will most likely include actions focused on more than one of these mechanisms. Research has found that strategies that include a mix of coercive threats and conditional inducements tend to be more effective than those that use just one or the other.[13]

KEY ANALYTIC CONSIDERATIONS: The better one understands how potential perpetrators perceive their core interests and threats, and how they value alternative courses of action, the more effectively one can design a dissuasion strategy. It is especially important to avoid "projecting your thought process or value system onto someone else," a common analytic pitfall known as "mirror imaging."[14]

SELECTED TOOLS THAT COMMONLY SUPPORT THE STRATEGY:[15]
- *Mediation* can help potential perpetrators negotiate a resolution to underlying conflicts that could otherwise lead them to consider committing atrocities.[16] When a mediator offers tangible incentives or makes coercive threats, it can affect a potential perpetrator's expectation of costs and benefits. Mediation can also lead potential perpetrators to change the way they value different outcomes by encouraging parties to reconsider the way they define their identities and core interests.

- *Sanctions (comprehensive economic sanctions and targeted sanctions)* are a way of increasing costs—economic and/or reputational—on the commission of atrocities. The threat of sanctions can raise the expected cost of committing atrocities before they begin.

- *Conditional offers of assistance (development assistance, security assistance, trade or investment incentives, security guarantees)* can raise the expected benefits of courses of action that do not involve the commission of atrocities.

- *Threats of prosecution* can raise the expected cost of future atrocities.

- *Naming and shaming* can exact political or reputational costs on atrocity perpetrators and can raise the expected costs of atrocities on other potential perpetrators.

2. Degrade potential perpetrators' capacity to commit atrocities

SUMMARY: Like dissuasion strategies, degrading strategies focus on potential perpetrators, directly or indirectly. Degrading capacity could affect potential perpetrators' expected costs and benefits of committing atrocities, and thus, contribute to a dissuasion strategy. But even if elites are determined to commit atrocities, their ability to do so will depend on using certain kinds of capacities to carry out large-scale attacks on civilian populations. Degrading capacity strategies are generally most appropriate to contexts in which the relevant means are limited or costly to potential perpetrators.

KEY ASSUMPTIONS: Strategies focused on degrading capacity assume that material and operational capabilities affect the occurrence and severity of atrocities. In most circumstances, a degrading capacity strategy will focus on one or more of the following means: (1) Personnel, such as state security forces, non-state armed groups, party-affiliated youth wings, and informal militia; (2) Arms, such as small arms

and light weapons, artillery, aircraft, and drones; (3) Financial resources, such as reserves of hard currency, revenues from trade, taxation, and looting, and loans or grants from international actors; and (4) Communications, such as those that enable top leaders to coordinate plans privately and communicate publicly to mobilize supporters.

MECHANISMS:

- Reducing resources available to potential perpetrators (for example, via comprehensive economic or targeted financial sanctions, arms embargoes, or restrictions on exports of advanced surveillance or communications technologies);

- Increasing the cost or reducing the operational efficiency of attacking civilian populations (for example, via jamming/blocking communications channels, no-fly zones).

KEY ANALYTIC CONSIDERATIONS: The better one understands the material capabilities and operational plans of potential perpetrators, the more effectively one can design a strategy to degrade critical capacities.

It is also important to assess potential unintended consequences of actions aimed at degrading capacities. For example, in multi-party conflict situations, degrading one party's capacity might alter the balance of power, inadvertently reducing the likelihood of a negotiated resolution or even increasing the capacity of a different actor to commit atrocities.

SELECTED TOOLS THAT COMMONLY SUPPORT THE STRATEGY:

- *Targeted financial sanctions* can limit the ability of potential perpetrators to use resources to finance the commission of atrocities.

- *Arms embargoes* can reduce access to weapons used to attack civilian populations and/or increase the cost of acquiring arms by forcing perpetrators to use illicit networks.

- *Trade or investment restrictions (comprehensive economic sanctions or targeted sanctions)* can reduce resources available to perpetrators and/or force them to pursue other, more costly options to finance atrocities or acquire critical means.

- *Disruption of communications networks (for example, via cyber attacks)* can make it more difficult for perpetrators to coordinate or recruit foot soldiers, in turn reducing the operational efficiency of attacking civilian populations.

- *Military intervention* can reduce resources available to perpetrators by destroying military materiel and/or reduce the operational efficiency of attacking civilian populations by deterring certain modes of attack (for example, aerial bombardment).

3. Protect vulnerable civilian populations

SUMMARY: This strategy is distinguished by not being focused on potential perpetrators, but on civilian populations that could be targeted for systematic attack. A protection strategy has potential to minimize negative consequences even if potential perpetrators remain determined to commit atrocities. Protecting

civilian populations could also affect potential perpetrators' expected costs and benefits of committing atrocities, and thus, contribute to a dissuasion strategy.

KEY ASSUMPTIONS: Protection strategies assume that perpetrators' ability to access civilian populations and the capacity of targeted civilian populations to protect themselves or get out of harm's way affect the occurrence and severity of atrocities.

MECHANISMS:
- Denying potential perpetrators access or opportunity to attack civilian populations—that is, direct physical protection;

- Increasing civilian populations' capacity to defend themselves (for example, via provision of lethal or non-lethal support);

- Mitigating harm to civilian populations (for example, helping civilian populations avoid or withstand attacks by facilitating refugee resettlement or providing life-saving humanitarian assistance).

KEY ANALYTIC CONSIDERATIONS: The better one understands the vulnerability and capabilities of civilian populations (including geographic and economic dimensions) and the ways that they would be likely to respond, if attacked, the more effectively one can design a strategy to protect them.

As with strategies focused on degrading capacity of potential perpetrators, it is important to assess potential unintended consequences of protecting civilian populations. In multi-party conflict situations, and especially in contexts where civilians mix with combatants or where it is difficult to distinguish defensive from offensive capacities, boosting the security of one civilian group could shift conflict dynamics in unintended ways. For example, providing support to a non-state armed group could encourage a government to target civilian populations perceived to be associated with the armed group.

SELECTED TOOLS THAT COMMONLY SUPPORT THE STRATEGY:
- *Peace operations* can provide direct physical protection to civilian populations. They can also facilitate provision of humanitarian assistance, thereby mitigating harm to affected populations.

- *Security assistance to governments* or *support to non-state armed groups* can help protect civilian populations by helping deter threatening forces and/or by denying potential perpetrators' access to civilians.

- *Support to civilian self-protection efforts* can mitigate harm to civilian populations by strengthening their own capacity to avoid attacks, secure resources, and maintain life-sustaining practices (such as trade or farming).

- *Humanitarian assistance* can save lives and alleviate suffering for civilian populations, thus, mitigating the harm resulting from deliberate attacks on civilians.

- *Refugee protection*—whether by providing asylum, supporting refugees in camps, or facilitating resettlement in another country—entails physical protection from attack.[17]

4. Facilitate a leadership or political transition

SUMMARY: There may be some mass atrocity cases in which the perceived interests or ideologies of a small number of top leaders are the main drivers of mass atrocities, and these leaders are seen to be highly resistant to influence. In other circumstances, the prospect of a political leader staying in power beyond their term or after losing a democratic election might pose a serious threat of triggering mass atrocities. The existence of these types of cases points to another potential strategy: facilitating a political or leadership transition. [18]

Facilitating a leadership or political transition does not equate to forceful "regime change," but can rely on a range of cooperative and coercive measures. Nevertheless, facilitating leadership change should be recognized as both extremely challenging in strategic terms and highly controversial. Leaders normally place high value on remaining in power. Leaders who would seriously contemplate mass atrocities can be assumed to be even less amenable to stepping down, absent strong pressure and credible assurances that their core interests will be met after giving up power. Furthermore, one should expect that external efforts to effect a political transition will be seen by many as improper intrusion into another country's domestic politics—or even rank imperialism—especially if they lack a multilateral mandate or include coercive actions. Despite these issues, it appears that the United States and other governments have used or contemplated this strategy in several past atrocity crises, such as Liberia and Syria, so it is included here for completeness.[19]

KEY ASSUMPTIONS: This strategy assumes that new leaders would be less prone to commit atrocities or that a transition would mean avoiding a potential trigger. It further assumes that the exit of current leaders is a prerequisite to addressing other issues that increase the risk of mass atrocities.

MECHANISMS:
- Increasing expected costs of remaining in political power;

- Increasing expected benefits of leadership exit;

- Facilitating a leadership transition agreement among conflicting parties;

- Reducing political, military, and/or material bases of power to make continued rule impossible;

- Forceful removal of leaders.

The first three of these mechanisms are very similar to mechanisms underlying a dissuasion strategy. The difference is that a strategy to facilitate political transition seeks to alter a leader's decision calculus in favor of exiting from power as distinct from not committing mass atrocities. The last mechanism— forceful removal of leaders—is clearly the most controversial. Even its proponents generally accept it to be a measure of last resort.

KEY ANALYTIC CONSIDERATIONS: As a strategy focused sharply on the decision making of one or a few individuals, insights into their mindsets, fears, and aspirations are critical to developing an effective strategy to facilitate political transition. Likewise, it is critical to understand how other influential individuals and groups within the country as well as the broader population are likely to respond to a facilitated transition.

Experience underscores the importance of considering unintended consequences of irregular leadership transitions. Efforts to facilitate a leadership transition can provide a convenient tool for leaders who wish to divert local grievances onto external actors. Worse yet, leadership transition can lead to acute political instability and widespread violence.

SELECTED TOOLS THAT COMMONLY SUPPORT THE STRATEGY:

- *Diplomatic pressure (via bilateral, multilateral, or public diplomacy)* can increase the expected costs of, or reduce domestic political support necessary for, remaining in political power.

- *Mediation* can help facilitate an agreement among conflicting parties that includes a leadership exit.

- *Threat or use of targeted sanctions* against culpable leaders can increase the cost of remaining in political power or lead to losses in political support or material resources that are required to remain in power.

- *Threats of prosecutions* unless a leader steps down can increase the expected cost of remaining in power.[20]

- *Offers of official amnesties* for former leaders can increase the expected benefits of stepping down or encourage other elites to abandon support for a leader.

- *Electoral assistance* can help facilitate a political transition by supporting a credible democratic process to elect a new leader.

- *Military intervention* can forcefully remove a leader.[21]

THREE IMPORTANT CONSIDERATIONS IN CHOOSING AND DEVELOPING ANY ATROCITY PREVENTION STRATEGY

In addition to the considerations noted for each of the four general strategies, any deliberation about selecting and implementing a strategy to help prevent mass atrocities should factor in the following issues:

Strategic interaction: A successful strategy must anticipate and adapt to other actors' responses

A defining feature of strategy is that it takes account of the dynamic interaction between one party's actions and others' responses. Actions do not exert effects in a static context or on defenseless adversaries. Rather, other parties can try to thwart intended effects. For example, targets of an arms embargo can turn to the black market; conflict parties can engage in negotiations in bad faith; and perpetrators can deflect international criticism by accusing domestic opponents of conspiring with outsiders. The effectiveness of any strategy, therefore, depends heavily on how well it anticipates and adapts to counter-strategies.

Analysts and planners should:

- Think ahead about what counter-strategies are available to other parties, especially potential perpetrators, which counter-strategy they are most likely to choose, and how those actions would be likely to alter the impact of one's strategy. Strategies that are more resistant to available counter-strategies should generally be favored.

- Think about strategy as a process that involves multiple "moves." Strategy is not a "set it and forget it" enterprise. Except in the rarest cases, it will be necessary to revisit a chosen strategy and adapt or even abandon it in favor of a better approach. This implies that strategies that leave greater scope for future action should generally be favored over ones that lock in or limit future options.

Collective action: Strategies are invariably stronger when undertaken in coordination with other preventive actors

For simplicity, this framework describes the strategies and tools as if they are choices to be made by a single entity, without respect to the views of other actors that share—partially or fully—an interest in preventing mass atrocities. This should not obscure that in virtually every instance, preventing atrocities involves at least some degree of collective action.

The dynamics of collective action are most visible in multilateral fora such as the UN Security Council, where resolutions require nine affirmative votes and no vetoes, but are also present and important in less formal contexts without agreed rules. For example, the United States and European allies have reportedly coordinated on military assistance to Ukraine in the wake of Russia's 2022 invasion. To reap the benefits of collective action, policy makers need to forge political support among partners, develop a plan for operational coordination, and agree on a way to share costs.

Analysts and planners should:

- Survey formal and informal mechanisms for collective action that could be used to help prevent mass atrocities.

- Consider what actions other actors would agree to undertake in concert, or at least would not resist.

- Recognize that one might need to develop a strategy aimed firstly at persuading allies or other third-parties to support a strategy to prevent atrocities.

Net assessment: Assessing costs and risks along with expected benefits

To emphasize the mechanisms through which different strategies work, this framework describes how various actions "can" help prevent atrocities. Of course, these effects are not guaranteed. Decision makers must assess the likelihood that these desired effects will be achieved in particular cases. Beyond estimating and comparing probabilities of success in preventing atrocities, a "net assessment" of alternative strategies also involves analyzing costs and risks, including potential unintended consequences.

No action is cost free. The direct costs of UN peace operations or humanitarian assistance for displaced persons, for example, can be measured in additional dollars paid to the UN or humanitarian organizations, while the costs of economic sanctions might be measured in higher costs of certain goods on the global market. Less tangible costs are also relevant—for example, strained relations with a government that might result from diplomatic pressure or "naming and shaming." Furthermore, actions can have higher or lower "opportunity costs," when taking one action means foreclosing potential benefits that might have accrued had an alternative been chosen.

In assessing a strategy's expected costs and benefits, it is also important to contemplate potential unintended consequences, positive and negative. Although it is difficult to anticipate and assess the magnitude of unintended consequences—especially so-called second- and third-order effects—taking time to think through the full range of likely consequences is important for comparing alternative strategies and helping to improve a given strategy's design and implementation.

Strategies also vary in terms of risk. Some might carry a chance of a large benefit, but also a chance of backfiring—for example, pressuring an abusive leader to leave power could bring an end to widespread rights violations or lead them to increase attacks on civilians. Other strategies—perhaps restricting capacity to commit atrocities via an arms embargo—might only have potential to achieve smaller gains, but carry less downside risk.

In sum, candidate strategies will need to be considered not just for their expected near-term benefit in preventing atrocities, but also for their costs and risks for other important interests and objectives. This entails inherently difficult judgments about how to weigh different interests and how to manage risks.

Analysts and planners should:
- Weigh the expected costs of alternative actions together with their expected benefits.

- Think about potential unintended consequences—positive and negative—of attempts to prevent atrocities.

- Assess the risks associated with different atrocity prevention strategies and actions and whether higher or lower risk-reward approaches are preferred.

- Analyze the potential impact (positive or negative) of atrocity prevention actions on other important goals or interests.

CONCLUSION

Preventing mass atrocities is at once an imperative and a profound challenge. The premise of this document is that one way to improve decision making in response to atrocity risks is to foster more systematic consideration about strategies, or mechanisms that connect specific actions to immediate effects and ultimate impact. Thus, the framework describes four general atrocity prevention strategies–distinct, but not mutually exclusive ways that a set of actions can contribute to the prevention of mass atrocities.

Thinking about atrocity prevention strategies can help decision makers choose which specific tools to use and how to design and implement them for greatest effect.

These strategies do not supply a formula for preventing atrocities. No general framework can take the place of context-specific analysis. Thinking about atrocity prevention strategies can help decision makers choose which specific tools to use and how to design and implement them for greatest effect. Over time, experience should lead to more refined thinking about the nature of atrocity prevention strategies, greater understanding about how different tools support different strategies, and insights about how to improve decision making processes themselves.

ANNEX A: CASE ILLUSTRATIONS OF THE FOUR GENERAL STRATEGIES TO HELP PREVENT MASS ATROCITIES

This annex is meant to provide very brief, real-world illustrations of the four general strategies described above. The main purpose is to highlight cases in which the US government used multiple tools in support of a broader strategy (even if the strategy was only discernible in retrospect), whether or not the strategy was fully successful. The illustrations are far from exhaustive: in each case, additional actions may have supported the highlighted strategy, and other strategies may have been pursued concurrently.

1. Dissuading potential perpetrators from committing atrocities: *Kenya (2007–2008)*

- In coordination with other international actors, the US government used a combination of diplomacy, conditional offers of assistance, coercive threats, and support for official mediation to dissuade political leaders from fomenting further violence against civilians during the post-electoral crisis in Kenya in 2007–2008.

- US President George W. Bush expressed public support for a power sharing deal, which the UN-African Union mediation, led by former UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan, was seeking to facilitate. Privately, US officials coordinated closely with Annan and his team.

- Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice traveled to Nairobi in February 2008 to meet with Kenyan political leaders and support Annan's mediation. In her meetings, she reportedly "dangle[d] the prospect of additional economic help for Kenya if the rival factions could reach a compromise."[22] A week later, when talks were stalled, Rice issued a thinly veiled threat, stating that "the future of our relationship with both sides and their legitimacy hinges on their cooperation to achieve this political solution. In that regard, we are exploring a wide range of possible actions."

2. Degrading the capacity of potential perpetrators: *Syria (2011-pres.)*

- According to the State Department, "Since the uprisings began in March 2011, the U.S. government has intensely pursued calibrated sanctions to deprive the [Syrian] regime of the resources it needs to continue violence against civilians."[23]

- Executive Order 13582, signed in August 2011, "prohibits the importation of petroleum or petroleum products of Syrian origin, and prohibits U.S. persons from involvement in transactions involving Syrian petroleum or petroleum products."[24] The petroleum industry accounted for roughly a quarter of Syria's pre–civil war revenue.

- Executive Order 13606, signed in April 2012, focused on how human rights abuses in Syria (and Iran) were "facilitated by computer and network disruption, monitoring, and tracking by those governments, and abetted by entities in Iran and Syria that are complicit in their governments' malign use of technology for those purposes."[25] The sanctions in the order were "designed primarily to address the need to prevent entities located in whole or in part in Iran and Syria from facilitating or committing serious human rights abuses."[26]

3. Protecting civilian populations: *Central African Republic (2013–14)*

- The US government used a combination of humanitarian assistance and support to multilateral peacekeeping operations to help protect vulnerable civilian populations in the Central African Republic in 2013–14.

- As the crisis escalated in late 2013, the United States mobilized $15 million in new humanitarian assistance for CAR, with a focus on supporting refugees, internally displaced persons, and conflict-affected populations.

- In December 2013, the US Department of Defense provided airlift for a battalion of troops from Burundi to CAR, where they joined the AU peacekeeping operation. The United States also provided defense articles to the AU-led operation, including armored personnel carriers, 4x4s, troop carriers, logistics trucks, and communications.[27]

4. Facilitating political or leadership transition: *Democratic Republic of the Congo (2014–18)*

- Between 2014 and 2018, the US government used a combination of diplomacy and targeted sanctions to encourage President Joseph Kabila to step down from the presidency of the DRC, in part because of worries that remaining in power beyond his term could lead to an escalation of attacks on civilian populations.

- Under Secretary of State Sarah Sewall "traveled to Kinshasa in 2015 carrying a letter from Secretary Kerry, who had visited Kinshasa in 2014 to try to persuade Kabila not to run for a third term. Sewall delivered a senior-level message of concern about the coming year and opened a direct channel to Kabila that was used when tensions flared. The White House also weighed in, with President Obama calling Kabila in March 2015 to emphasize the importance of peaceful and credible elections and protecting the rights of all DRC citizens."[28]

- With respect to sanctions, "the State and Treasury Departments prepared sequenced tiers of increasingly senior designations, which they would proceed to roll out following certain trigger events, primarily involving violence against civilians. Each tier moved up a rung in terms of proximity to Kabila and his family (who had substantial overseas assets), making clear that they themselves could be ensnared."[29]

ANNEX B: REVIEW OF EXISTING STRATEGIC FRAMEWORKS

There are many ways to describe the range of strategies that governments could use to help prevent mass atrocities. This annex is a brief and selective review of existing strategic frameworks and other sources of ideas on atrocity prevention strategies.

I identify strengths and weaknesses of existing frameworks based on the assumption that a strategic framework should seek to maximize three criteria:

1. **Precision**: how well a framework elucidates the ways in which specific actions contribute to the ultimate goal of preventing mass atrocities;

2. **Comprehensiveness**: the extent to which a framework captures the full range of potentially relevant strategies to prevent mass atrocities;

3. **Simplicity**: the extent to which a framework minimizes the number of discrete categories, avoids jargon, and can be communicated effectively to nonspecialists.

Strategies drawn from atrocity prevention reports

GENOCIDE PREVENTION TASK FORCE (2008): The Genocide Prevention Task Force's discussion of "halting and reversing escalation" recommended developing strategies focused on four different "target groups": "(a) those planning, authorizing, and fomenting genocide/mass atrocities (to affect their decision calculus); (b) those likely to carry out the genocide/mass atrocities (to reduce their operational effectiveness); (c) the potential victims (to improve their chances of survival); and (d) other relevant domestic and foreign actors (to persuade and mobilize them to play a positive role)."[30] For each of these groups, the Task Force identified "illustrative targeted measures" along a spectrum of crisis escalation (see Figure B-1).[31] Using this framework would result in "different policy packages or 'playbooks' ... that could be mixed and matched to respond to a variety of contingencies for different phases of a crisis."[32]

The Task Force's framework has a number of virtues, most notably its clear articulation of multiple potential targets for preventive action and its recognition that specific actions should most likely change depending on the degree of escalation. The balance between preparation—"playbooks" that could be developed in advance—and flexibility is also a strength. The framework's main weakness is in not spelling out the ways in which actions could affect the "decision calculus" of decision makers.

FIGURE B-1: "Illustrative Targeted Measures" by target group and degree of crisis escalation (Genocide Prevention Task Force)[33]

Target Group	Crisis Escalation →
DECISION MAKERS	Diplomatic pressure Mediation/negotiation/arbitration Political/economic incentives or threats Media campaign Legal threats Political/economic penalties
PERPETRATORS	Arms embargo Informational operations/media campaign Legal threats Military options (radio/cell jamming, no-fly zones, covert operations)
VICTIMS	Defense support (warning, covert training, or military assistance) Interpositional deployments/physical barriers Safe havens/evacuation routes Humanitarian relief/support
THIRD PARTIES	Diplomatic pressure Political/economic incentives or threats Media campaign Indirect/direct support

***MASS ATROCITY PREVENTION AND RESPONSE OPERATIONS* (MAPRO) (2012):** Based on an interagency collaboration, in 2012 the US Army Peacekeeping and Stability Operations Institute published *Mass Atrocity Prevention and Response Operations: A Policy Planning Handbook*. The handbook presents three general strategic approaches: suasion, compellence, and intervention. The authors match these strategic options to a "'policy toolkit' that includes Diplomatic, Informational, Military, and Economic (DIME) actions."[34] The result is a 12-cell matrix containing more than 100 specific tools, described as a "partial inventory" (Figure B-2).[35]

The authors explain that policy measures are "not directed exclusively towards perpetrators," but also aim "to influence other actors including those who directly and indirectly provide support to perpetrators" and "to mobilize positive actors for more effective prevention and response."[36] The handbook further underscores that "effective use of all tools provides a greater impact than employing measures in isolation."[37] The authors also present eight purposes to which policy measures can be applied: "Mitigating conditions that could make mass atrocities more likely; exposing perpetrators and their enablers to international scrutiny; establishing the credibility and capability of the USG or the international community; protecting potential victims; dissuading, stopping, isolating, or punishing perpetrators or their enablers; diminishing perpetrator motivation or capability to conduct mass atrocities; building and

demonstrating international resolve; [and] convincing bystanders and negative actors to not support perpetrators and take constructive action to mitigate mass atrocities."[38] The handbook does not relate these purposes to the three broad strategic approaches.

The main strengths and weaknesses of the MAPRO framework both stem from its level of detail. Displaying so many individual tools and articulating such a large number of potential purposes should help readers understand the full spectrum of potentially useful actions and modes of action. The level of detail, however, also works against the usability of this framework. In addition, the distinctions between suasion, compellence, and intervention are not entirely clear.

FIGURE B-2: Atrocity Prevention and Response Toolbox (*Mass Atrocity Prevention and Response Operations*)[39]

	DIPLOMATIC	INFORMATIONAL	MILITARY	ECONOMIC
SUASION	•Pressure/Inducements/Contacts •Informal Negotiations •Fact Finding Missions •Coalition/Consensus Building •Coordination with IGOs/NGOs •USG Planning •Embassy Augmentation •Speeches by Senior Leaders •Formal Negotiations •USG Meet with Victim Groups •National Leader Engagement •Mediation •Use of Intermediaries •Summits •Coalition Building •UNSC / UNGA Resolutions	•Policy Statements •Strategic Comm Plan/Program •Media Relations •Conflict Assessment •Information Sharing •Enhanced Media Activities •Influence Local Civil Society •Congressional Testimony •"MAPRO Orchestra" •Arts Promotion	•Theater Security Cooperation •Security Assistance to Partners •Exercises •Port Visits •Other Military Support to: • Deter Perpetrators • Support Diplomacy with Credible Threats • Prepare for Future Ops	•Foreign Aid •Debt Relief •Other Economic Support to incentivize perpetrators and their enablers
COMPELLENCE	•Travel Bans on Perpetrators •Travel Advisories •State Sponsors of Terrorism List •Reduce Embassy/Consulates •Criminal Investigations •International Law Enforcement •Extradition/Legal Actions •Amnesty/Immunity •Diplomatic Activity Restriction •Restrict Culture/Sport Events •Isolation •Recognize Opposition Groups •Ambassador Recall •Support to Exiles •Break Diplomatic Relations •Noncombatant Evac Ops (NEO) •Sanctions/Actions on Enablers •Ultimatums	•Human Rights Monitoring •Atrocity Reporting System •Increased Intelligence Gathering •HUMINT Networks •Intelligence Sharing •Counter Hate Media	•Access/Basing Arrangements •Expanded Military Presence •Port Visits •Headquarters Activation •Increased Alert Status •Deployment Preparations •Headquarters Deployment •Expanded ISR •MISO •Shows of Force •Blockade or Quarantine	•Technology Controls •Exchange Rate Adjustment •IMF/World Bank Advocacy •Trade Policy Alteration •Freeze/Seize Assets •Foreign Direct Investment •Embargoes •International Sanctions
INTERVENTION	•Treaty Compliance •Stationing/Overflight Rights •Other Diplomatic Support: •Mandates •Legitimacy •Int'l Support •End Conflict •Post-Conflict Preparations	•Electronic Countermeasures •Jamming/disrupting •Cyber •Military Info Spt Ops (MISO) •Release Intelligence •Truth and Reconciliation Commissions •Other Information Support to: •Build/Maintain Int'l Support •Divide Perpetrators •Encourage Positive Actors •Support Operations •Capitalize on Success •Mitigate Setbacks •Manage Expectations •Set Post-Conflict Conditions	•Expanded MISO •Electronic Warfare •Noncombatant Evac Ops (NEO) •Humanitarian Assistance •Log Support for 3rd Parties •Train/Equip 3rd Parties •Mine Clearance •No-Fly Zones •Combat Camera •Limited Temporary Intervention •SOF Operations •Strikes or Raids •Peace Operations •Full Intervention (MARO)	•Humanitarian Assistance •Other Economic Support to: •Support Victim Groups •Support Partners •Support Regional Countries •Post-conflict R&S Efforts

"A STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK FOR MASS ATROCITY PREVENTION" (2013): Ruben Reike, Serena Sharma, and Jennifer Welsh present a framework based on a "problem analysis triangle" developed by criminologists, which distinguishes prevention strategies by three objectives: "change the behaviour of perpetrators, reduce the vulnerability of victims, and create a less permissive environment for the commission of atrocity crimes."[40] They further break down potentially relevant targeted prevention tools by stage of an atrocity prevention situation: "imminent emergency and 'escalation prevention'" and "crisis and mobilisation" (see Figure B-3).[41] The authors underscore "the need to analyse tools as part of a larger, integrated strategy of mass atrocity prevention," which "recognise[s] the relationship among tools: one tool may be a logical precursor to another, or one tool may be in potential tension with another or prevent its use later in the temporal chain."[42]

The relative simplicity of this framework is a strength. The three objectives are easy to understand and distinguish. The distinction between the two stages of escalation is less clear. In addition, the framework says little about how specific actions can contribute to their respective objectives. Changing behavior of perpetrators appears to be limited to affecting their incentives. And it is unclear how one should understand "permissiveness" of the environment or how any particular action would affect the degree of permissiveness.

FIGURE B-3: Targeted and systemic tools of international crimes prevention ("A Strategic Framework for Mass Atrocity Prevention")[43]

	Perpetrators (Incentives)	Victims (Vulnerability)	Situation (Permissiveness)
Imminent Emergency and 'Escalation Prevention'	Targeted sanctions on key individuals (asset freezes, travel bans) Referral of individuals to the ICC Security Council resolutions naming individuals	Strengthen the capacity of victims to defend themselves (through material and training) No-fly zones Physical protection of IDP camps Safe areas Opening of borders to enable escape (refugee measures)	Radio jamming Spreading of diverse alternative views through UN broadcasts Provision of mobile communications technology to populations Satellite surveillance Interdiction of weapons shipments
Crisis and Mobilisation	Threat of international criminal prosecution Aid conditionality Economic incentives to adopt right behaviour Statements of conference by the Security Council, Human Rights Council, regional organisations or individual governments Negotiation/ mediation	Preventive deployments of military force Challenging of hate speech or atrocity-justifying ideology Deployment of human rights monitoring or fact-finding missions	Reducing the availability of weapons (bilateral actions and multilateral measures, e.g. ATT) Sanctions on or blacklisting of commercial entities providing material support Visible international engagement (e.g. Security Council agenda) Public scrutiny and/or NGO involvement Dissemination of relevant norms and regulations
Triggering Factors: Elections, Assassinations, Large-scale protests, Armed conflict, etc.			
Risk Factors	International and regional support for: › civic education › inter-faith dialogue Material assistance/redistribution to address underlying grievances	Strengthen international criminal justice International support for domestic institutions (e.g. civil service, security sector, rule of law)	

Note: This diagram is illustrative and not meant to be exhaustive of all mass atrocity prevention tools.

UN SECRETARY-GENERAL REPORT ON THE "RESPONSIBILITY TO PROTECT" (2019): The UN Secretary-General's annual reports on the "responsibility to protect" tend to include long lists of measures that could potentially help prevent or respond to mass atrocities. The 2019 report, however, summarizes third-party actions under two headings: (1) "persuasion and negotiation" and (2) "direct action." The former constitutes a range of diplomatic actions that seek "to change the behaviour of actors in situations at risk of atrocity crimes."[44] The Secretary-General defines "direct action" as being "focused on the capacity of actors to commit atrocity crimes, including by addressing hate speech and incitement to violence, preventing the flow of arms or degrading the capacity of potential perpetrators. Direct action may also be focused on reducing the vulnerability of civilian populations by denying armed actors' access to them, protecting them with armed peacekeepers, or placing them out of harm's way."[45]

With just two basic modes of action, this framework is among the simplest available. This simplicity comes at the cost of comprehensiveness. Unlike other frameworks, this one does not distinguish between multiple types of actors that could be targeted by preventive actions. In addition, it appears to omit the role of coercive actions in changing the decision making of influential actors.

Strategies drawn from formal models

Based on their application of economic models to the perpetration of genocide and mass killing, **CHUCK ANDERTON AND JURGEN BRAUER (2016)** describe three classes of prevention strategies: (1) resource policies, (2) productivity (or isoquant) policies, and (3) price policies.[46] According to Anderton and Brauer, a decline in a potential perpetrator's resources can be expected to decrease its attacks on civilians (or its "demand for civilian killing," to use the authors' economic terminology). The second type of policy seeks to make attacks on civilians less useful in achieving perpetrators' goals (which the authors assume is control). Productivity policies might also seek to make "contesting rebels more productive," assuming that potential perpetrators choose between attacking civilians and armed groups. Lastly, the authors suggest that increasing the cost of attacking civilians should lead perpetrators to reduce these attacks, according to basic economic theory.

ANDREW H. KYDD AND SCOTT STRAUS (2013) develop a game theoretic model to identify and analyze alternative third-party strategies in a generic mass atrocity scenario.[47] According to their model, one strategy to prevent atrocities is to facilitate issue resolution to prevent outbreak of war. They don't elaborate on what specific strategies could be used to facilitate resolution between a government and an opposition group, but their model stipulates that the parties have opposing preferences. By inference, a third party could increase the chance of negotiated resolution by: (1) trying to influence the parties' utility functions (i.e., how they value/prefer specific outcomes, without changing tangible incentives); (2) making conditional offers that could "sweeten" potential deals or "sour" resort to war; and/or (3) facilitating communication or addressing information deficits between parties. Kydd and Straus further suggest that third parties can reduce the amount of atrocities that conflicting parties commit during war by imposing costs on the commission of atrocities via sanctions and by intervening militarily.

ANNEX C: ILLUSTRATIVE LIST OF ATROCITY PREVENTION TOOLS[48]

ATROCITY PREVENTION TOOL	SHORT DEFINITION
Arms Embargoes	Prohibitions on weapons transfers
Bilateral Diplomacy	Diplomatic relations and activity between two countries
Comprehensive Economic Sanctions	Coercive measures that target the economic capacity of a state, including broad trade and *investment restrictions*
Cyber Attacks	Attacks on computer systems or networks Cyber attacks can include *disruption of communications networks*.
Development Assistance	Aid that promotes economic growth, welfare, and humanitarian relief Development assistance can include *humanitarian assistance* and *electoral assistance*.
Diplomatic Sanctions	Severing or downgrading diplomatic relations to signal disapproval
Fact-Finding	Information gathering efforts on conflicts and/or violations of international law
Mediation	A non-legal conflict management process facilitated by an external actor
Military Intervention	Introduction of foreign military forces into a conflict
Military Presence	Non-invasion, peacetime troops stationed in a host state
Multilateral Diplomacy	Diplomatic relations between multiple states or through international institutions
Naming and Shaming	Public condemnation of perpetrators of mass atrocities
Official Amnesties	The official barring of legal proceedings against certain individuals or groups
Peace Operations	Deployment of military and/or civilian personnel to a conflict zone to promote peace
Prosecutions	Legal proceedings against suspected perpetrators of mass atrocities
Public Diplomacy	A country's public-facing diplomatic efforts
Refugee Protection	The legal and physical protection of refugees

Security Assistance	Aid that promotes another state's defense
Security Guarantees	Promises made to protect or respect a party's security
Support to Civilian Self-Protection Efforts	Assistance to help civilian communities protect themselves
Support to Non-State Armed Groups	Aid provided by a foreign state to a rebel group
Targeted Sanctions	Coercive measures that target the assets or activities of individuals or corporations, including targeted trade or *investment restrictions*
Trade or Investment Incentives	Economic measures that seek to incentivize specific state behavior

ENDNOTES

[1] For more information, please visit ushmm.org/lessons-learned.

[2] Scott Straus, *Fundamentals of Genocide and Mass Atrocity Prevention* (Washington, DC: United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, 2016), https://www.ushmm.org/m/pdfs/Fundamentals-of-Genocide-and-Mass-Atrocity-Prevention.pdf.

[3] Philip Zelikow defines strategy as "those mechanisms, those theories of the relation between government action and the behavior of others, by which it is hoped that the policy will act upon its object to produce the desired result ... Each strategy, then, is an analytically distinctive pathway toward the policy objectives being sought" ("Foreign Policy Engineering: From Theory to Practice and Back Again," *International Security* 18, no. 4 (1994): 164–165).

[4] In this conception, strategy is to all foreign policy actions what a "theory of change" is to a foreign assistance program—a clear articulation of the connections between activities, immediate outcomes, and ultimate impacts.

[5] As part of the Museum's "lessons learned" project, the Simon-Skjodt Center reviewed nearly 400 research reports about selected atrocity prevention tools and summarized the findings in the "Tools for Atrocity Prevention" web resource. To explore the results of the research review, visit preventiontools.ushmm.org/. See Annex C at the end of this report for a non-comprehensive list of atrocity prevention tools that are referenced.

[6] On the question of sequencing, the Genocide Prevention Task Force wrote, "In crafting preventive diplomatic strategies, care must be taken not to follow an overly rigid process or 'escalatory ladder' with potential perpetrators." (Madeleine K. Albright and William S. Cohen, *Preventing Genocide: A Blueprint for U.S. Policymakers* (Washington, DC: United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, American Academy of Diplomacy, and US Institute of Peace), 69).

[7] The "Tools for Atrocity Prevention" web resource allows users to filter 23 atrocity prevention tools—including 12 with complete research reviews—based on the four strategies outlined in this framework. To explore the filter, visit preventiontools.ushmm.org/.

[8] Several useful resources on structural prevention exist, including (1) Stephen McLoughlin, *The Structural Prevention of Mass Atrocities: Understanding Risk and Resilience* (London: Routledge, 2014); (2) Alex Bellamy, "*Reducing Risk, Strengthening Resilience: Toward the Structural Prevention of Atrocity Crimes*," The Stanley Foundation, April 2016, https://stanleycenter.org/publications/reducing-risk-strengthening-resilience-toward-the-structural-prevention-of-atrocity-crimes/; (3) US Agency for International Development, "Field Guide: Helping Prevent Mass Atrocities," 2015, https://www.usaid.gov/democracy/document/field-guide-helping-prevent-mass-atrocities; (4) UN Secretary-General, "Fulfilling our collective responsibility: international assistance and the responsibility to protect," A/68/947–S/2014/449, July 2014. On systemic prevention, see (1) UN Secretary-General, "Progress report on the prevention of armed conflict," A/60/891, July 2006, 5; (2) Barnett R. Rubin and Bruce D. Jones, "Prevention of Violent Conflict: Tasks and Challenges for the United Nations," *Global Governance* 13 (2007): 391.

[9] Reports about US government responses were particularly valuable because they cover a diverse set of cases and discuss a variety of policy actions. The strategies described in this report are meant to be relevant to any government or intergovernmental organization and to some NGOs and private-sector actors. The following reports were reviewed: (1) Charles Brown, "The Obama Administration and the Struggle to Prevent Atrocities in the Central African Republic," United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, November 2016, https://www.ushmm.org/m/pdfs/20161116-Charlie-Brown-CAR-Report.pdf; (2) Mona Yacoubian, "Critical Junctures in United States Policy toward Syria: An Assessment of the Counterfactuals," United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, August 2017, https://www.ushmm.org/m/pdfs/Yacoubian-Critical-Junctures-US-Policy-Syria.pdf; (3) Jon Temin, "From Independence to Civil War: Atrocity Prevention and US Policy toward South Sudan," United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, July 2018, https://www.ushmm.org/m/pdfs/Jon_Temin_South_Sudan_Report_July_2018.pdf; (4) Stephen Pomper, "Atrocity Prevention Under the Obama Administration: What We Learned and the Path Ahead," United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, February 2018, https://www.ushmm.org/m/pdfs/Stephen_Pomper_Report_02-2018.pdf.

[10] If "protection" is conceived broadly, protecting civilian populations could be interpreted as the end - goal of each of the other strategies. As discussed below, it is described here as a distinct strategy to distinguish actions that focus more directly on potential targets of attacks rather than potential perpetrators.

[11] The inclusion of these strategies does not equate to the Simon-Skjodt Center's support for their use. As noted, the Simon-Skjodt Center identified these strategies based on a review of existing academic and policy literature (see Annex B) and reports analyzing US government action in response to recent mass atrocity crises.

[12] Mechanism, in this context, refers to "a process in which a set of linked steps leads from initial conditions to an outcome or effect" (Renate Mayntz, "Causal Mechanism and Explanation in Social Science," Max Planck Institute for the Study of Societies, 2020, iii, https://www.econstor.eu/bitstream/10419/218729/1/1698648588.pdf).

[13] For example, see Alexander L. George, *Forceful persuasion: Coercive diplomacy as an alternative to war* (Washington, DC: United States Institute of Peace Press, 1991).

[14] Frank Watanabe, "Fifteen Axioms for Intelligence Analysts," Central Intelligence Agency Center for the Study of Intelligence, 1997, 46, https://www.cia.gov/static/d0626fb44a97e2d8734ef69c66a8fb7e/Fifteen-Axioms-for-Analysts.pdf.

[15] This list of tools is not exhaustive; other atrocity prevention tools can support a dissuasion strategy.

[16] As discussed in the "Three important considerations in choosing and developing any atrocity prevention strategy" section of this report, this framework describes how various actions "can" help prevent atrocities to emphasize the mechanisms through which different strategies work. Of course, these effects are not guaranteed. Decision makers must assess the likelihood that these desired effects will be achieved in particular cases.

[17] It should be noted that even when refugees are protected effectively, forced displacement in itself can amount to a crime against humanity. In addition, when large-scale population movement is a primary goal of perpetrators (as in "ethnic cleansing" campaigns), facilitating flight can inadvertently aid perpetrators' plans even while protecting civilians from physical attack.

[18] I. William Zartman discussed "negotiations for the early retirement of a rapacious head of state" as a strategy to prevent deadly conflict, summarizing, "Where impending state collapse is the work of an egregious ruler, preventive diplomacy can focus on his or her removal" ("Preventing deadly conflict," *Security Dialogue* 32, no. 2 (2001): 146).

[19] Examples when this strategy was used or contemplated include the following: US and other policy makers pressuring Charles Taylor to resign from the presidency in Liberia in 2003 because he had aided atrocities in Sierra Leone (see "Liberia's President Charles Taylor resigns," *Reuters*, August 11, 2003, https://reliefweb.int/report/liberia/liberias-president-charles-taylor-resigns); US and European governments publicly calling for Bashar al-Assad to step down from the presidency in Syria in 2011 (see Yacoubian, "Critical Junctures"); the UN Security Council, African Union, and Economic Community of West African States, among others, seeking to facilitate a transition from Laurent Gbagbo to Alassane Ouattara in Cote d'Ivoire in 2011 following Ouattara's electoral victory (see "Côte d'Ivoire Post-Gbagbo: Crisis Recovery," Congressional Research Service, May 3, 2011, https://www.everycrsreport.com/reports/RS21989.html); and US policy makers reportedly considering options to encourage Salva Kiir and Riek Machar to give way to new leadership in South Sudan between 2013 and 2016 (see Temin, "From Independence to Civil War"). See also Annex A for a short description of US efforts between 2014–2018 to encourage Joseph Kabila to step down at the end of his constitutionally allowed term.

[20] Tools related to criminal justice are discussed here solely in terms of their potential to help prevent mass atrocities in a particular situation. These can be in tension with other important interests, such as developing a consistent system of criminal justice that leads to general deterrence and advancing justice for victim/survivor communities.

[21] As noted, the general strategies, mechanisms, and tools are included in this framework to help people think systematically about the range of options that can potentially help prevent mass atrocities, not to recommend any of them.

[22] Sheryl Gay Stolberg and Jeffrey Gettleman, "Rice, in Nairobi, Offers Incentives to End Violence," *The New York Times*, February 19, 2008, https://www.nytimes.com/2008/02/19/world/africa/19kenya.html.

[23] "Syria Sanctions," US State Department, accessed June 30, 2021, https://www.state.gov/syria-sanctions/.

[24] Ibid.

[25] "Executive Order 13606 of April 22, 2012," Federal Register, April 24, 2012, https://fas.org/irp/offdocs/eo/eo-13606.htm.

[26] Ibid.

[27] "FACT SHEET: U.S. Assistance to the Central African Republic," The White House Office of the Press Secretary, December 19, 2013, https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/the-press-office/2013/12/19/fact-sheet-us-assistance-central-african-republic.

[28] Pomper, "Atrocity Prevention Under the Obama Administration," 18.

[29] Ibid.

[30] Albright and Cohen, *Preventing Genocide,* 67.

[31] Ibid., 66, 67.

[32] Ibid., 67.

[33] Ibid., 66.

[34] *Mass Atrocity Prevention and Response Options (MAPRO): A Policy Planning Handbook* (Carlisle, Pennsylvania: US Army Peacekeeping and Stability Operations Institute, 2012), 81.

[35] Ibid., 84.

[36] Ibid., 81.

[37] Ibid.

[38] Ibid., 82.

[39] Ibid., 84.

[40] Ruben Reike, Serena Sharma, and Jennifer Welsh, "A Strategic Framework for Mass Atrocity Prevention," Australian Civil-Military Centre, 2013, 8.

[41] Ibid., 9.

[42] Ibid.,10.

[43] Ibid., 9.

[44] UN Secretary-General. "Responsibility to protect: lessons learned for prevention," A/73/898-S/2019/463, June 2019, para. 22.

[45] Ibid., para. 23.

[46] Charles H. Anderton and Jurgen Brauer (eds.). *Economic aspects of genocides, other mass atrocities, and their prevention* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2016).

[47] Andrew H. Kydd and Scott Straus, "The Road to Hell? Third-Party Intervention to Prevent Atrocities." *American Journal of Political Science* 57, no. 3: 673–84.

[48] This list and short definitions are drawn from the Simon-Skjodt Center's "Tools for Atrocity Prevention" web resource, available at: preventiontools.ushmm.org/. A few more narrowly defined tools that are mentioned earlier in the report are listed in italics within the short definitions of broader tool categories.

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